

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Criminal Investigation Division
Investigative Activity Report**

Case Number:

1000-0494

Case Title:

Cooke Aquaculture Fish Farm Release

Subject of Report:

2017-11-22 Interview of [REDACTED]

Reporting Office:

Seattle, WA, Area Office

Activity Date:

November 22, 2017

Reporting Official and Date:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

05-DEC-2017, [REDACTED]

Approving Official and Date:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

07-DEC-2017, Approved by: [REDACTED]

SYNOPSIS

On November 22, 2017, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] regarding his knowledge of the activities of July 24, 2017

DETAILS

On November 22, 2017, [REDACTED], regarding his knowledge of the activities of July 24, 2017. After being notified of the identity of the interviewing agent and the nature of the interview, [REDACTED] in substance, provided the following information:

[REDACTED]

On July 24, 2017, he was onboard the Millennium Star in Anacortes, Washington when at approximately 2230 hours, the vessel received a call from Harley Marine dispatch regarding a barge that was drifting loose around Cypress Island, Washington. Cypress Island is a short run from Anacortes, Washington.

Upon arrival at the "barge" it was discovered that this equipment in the water was a net pen. The Millennium Star did not get near the net pen as it was dark and the crew did not know the extent of the damage.

A skiff with personnel from the net pen came out to meet the Millennium Star. The personnel explained that the net pens needed to be pushed back in place after breaking loose from its moorings. He spoke with the personnel and explained to them that the Millennium Star would not be able to push on the net pen as it was too powerful and would just run over the top of the net pen. The personnel requested the use of the Millennium Star's rear cable winch to tow it back into place. He explained that the rear winch line if 2 1/2" cable and would be too large to hook to the net pen. The personnel then went to speak directly to the captain of the Millennium Star, [REDACTED].

After the conversation with the captain, he agreed to board the skiff and investigate the net pen for a possible solution. He climbed onboard the net pen and noticed several hook points and told the net pen

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personnel to make a bridle which would allow the Millennium Star to hook onto and tow the net pen. The personnel showed him some old, worn line that was available and he made them make the bridle out of new poly line.

While he was on the net pen structure, he was using a flashlight to walk around the structure and make observations. The personnel told him when he boarded the net pen structure to “watch where you walk.” He felt this was a normal thing to say upon boarding a new structure at night, but observed numerous holes in the net pen structure’s walking grates. He did not observe any buckling of the structure at first, but noticed that there were rust holes inside of the metal walking structure of the net pen and some buckling of the walkways where they were attached. This immediately raised his safety concerns because of the structure’s condition and he would not allow any more of the Millennium Star’s personnel to board the net pen structure. He did not see any other issues with the net pens.

He returned to the Millennium Star and explained to the captain that the personnel of the net pen were constructing a bridle for the Millennium Star to hook up to and tow the net pen structure. He then went to bed to rest for his next shift in approximately four hours.

When he returned for his next shift at the helm of the Millennium Star, at approximately 0400 hours on July 25, 2017, the Millennium Star was hooked up to the bridle of the net pen and was holding the net pen in position. He noticed several net pen personnel running around the net pen “like chickens with their heads cut off.” There was now another flat deck boat tied to the net pen and two other skiffs being used by the personnel.

He had very little communications with the net pen personnel other than normal operations. At one point the Millennium Star was hooked up to the east side of the net pen. During that time, he was receiving requests from the net pen personnel regarding the adjustment and movements of the net pen. During this time, he saw the net pen buckled and when he was pulling on the net pen, as requested, he observed a sign on the southeast corner on the structure begin to sink into the water. He released the pressure on the net pen and the sign recovered. He was concerned when this activity happened, but the personnel oversaw the situation so he followed their directions.

He did not take any pictures or videos of the incident.

Agent Note: During the interview, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] were present and provided additional industry information, but no information about the incident.